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Thatcher Statement Is Due in Spy Case

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LONDON, March 25 — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will make a special statement to Parliament tomorrow about the allegation this week that a former head of British counterintelligence may have been a spy for the Soviet Union.

If her statement supports the allegation, made in a new book serialized this week in *The Daily Mail*, it could cause a scandal with international ramifications and touch off cries here for a further investigation of possible infiltration of the security services.

The central figure in the case, much discussed in government circles today, is Sir Roger Hollis, who was director general of the M.I.5, the counterespionage service, from 1956 to 1965. He died in 1973.

Chapman Pincher, a British journalist with long experience in writing about espionage matters, says in his new book, "Their Trade is Treachery," that Sir Roger had been suspected, after his retirement, of having been an agent of the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence agency, and that the suspicion was the subject of two top-level secret investigations here, one before he died and one afterwards.

A Confession Is Lacking

"His frustrated interrogators believed that they had before them the most successful spy in history," the book declares. "But in order to prove it they needed a confession, and this they were never to get. Sir Roger never broke."

Mr. Pincher takes care, both in the book and in interviews he has given this week promoting it, not to make outright the allegation that Sir Roger was in fact a Soviet agent. Rather, the allegation is that he was suspected by M.I.5 of having been one, but that it was never proved.

"At no time in the book do I say Hollis was a spy," the author said. "It is a documentary adducing all the evidence brought forward by his own colleagues in their secret investigations."

The book also alleges that Tom Driberg, a left-wing Member of Parliament who was the chairman of the Labor Party from 1957 to 1958, was for decades a double agent, working for both M.I.5 and the K.G.B. Mr. Driberg, who was given a life peerage after his retirement, died in 1976.

But by far the more serious charge is the one involving Sir Roger, who had access to the most sensitive secret information in the Government. If it could be proved that he was giving information to the Russians, it would not only cast doubt on Britain's counterintelligence activities during a major part of the cold war, but also raise serious questions in the United States and other allied countries whose information is shared with the British.

Prime Minister Thatcher was being



United Press International

Sir Roger Hollis

urged by her political advisers tonight to respond to the widening controversy with a thorough and detailed statement tomorrow, like the one she gave in November 1979 exposing Anthony Blunt as a former Soviet spy.

Mr. Blunt, a former curator of Queen Elizabeth's art collection who was Sir Anthony before Buckingham Palace stripped him of his title, was identified then as the long-sought "fourth man" who helped Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, two young British diplomats,

escape to the Soviet Union in 1951 when they were about to be exposed as spies. (The "third man" in that case was Harold A. R. Philby, a senior intelligence officer, who defected to the Soviet Union in 1963.)

Immunity From Prosecution

In 1964, after Mr. Blunt's espionage activities became known to the Government, it was Sir Roger Hollis, as the head of counterintelligence, who took the initiative in seeking immunity from prosecution for him in exchange for a confession and subsequent cooperation with the authorities.

Sir Roger, who was knighted in 1960, was born in 1905, the son of an Anglican bishop, and educated at Oxford, though he did not graduate. He joined M.I.5 in the late 1930's after working for a time in Shanghai for the British American Tobacco Company.

In his discreet career of secret service, he established a reputation for being cool and conscientious, attracting unfavorable attention only after his retirement, when he divorced his wife of 29 years and married his secretary.

The former secretary, now his widow, abruptly disappeared last weekend from the stone cottage they shared in Somerset, telling a friend, "I have been told that I must go away for a while."

Sir Roger's son, Adrian, a lecturer at Oxford, said that he found the espionage allegation "unbelievable," and that his father had always been "very devoted to his country."